



# **Do All Celebrities Go to Heaven When They Die?**

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### **Judgment of the Church**

According to the Christian Faith we understand that a person's eternal destiny rests with the judgment of God alone. In our personal judgments we should be very careful about assigning anyone to heaven or hell since God alone knows what is in a person's heart. We can hold out the hope of eternal life for those who persevere in faith and obedience to the end, or we can conclude that someone's life was a contradiction of the Christian Faith and from all appearances he/she was not a Christian. But we cannot see into anyone's heart and know the eternal judgments of God. A person who appears to be pious and Christian could be living a lie and in fact be a hypocrite, known only to God. A person who appears to be non-Christian may come to repentance in their dying moments, something known only to God. Nor do we fully comprehend all the hidden mysteries of God's judgments and eternity.

The Church does, however, make judgments based on what is known, open and public. The Church makes judgments as to what the Christian Faith is and is not and whether or not a person is outwardly numbered among her children. These are the judgments that determine whether or not a person can be given a Christian burial in the Church. To give a Christian burial to someone who lived and died outside of the Church in contradiction to and opposition to the Christian Faith would be to bear a false witness about the Christian Faith and give people false hopes. St. Peter said, *...judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begins at us [the Church], what shall the end*

*be of them that obey not the gospel of God?* (I Peter 4:17) If we submit ourselves to the judgments of the Church in this life, i.e. conform ourselves to it, we will not be judged as condemned sinners before God at the last day. Thus, St. Paul admonished the Church at Corinth to excommunicate [exclude from Holy Communion and thus from the Church – the Body of Christ] the person living an immoral lifestyle who refused to repent, and by this act to deliver him unto Satan in the hopes this would bring him to repentance. The Saviour taught that if anyone refuses to hear the Church they are to be regarded as pagans who have rejected Christ and are outside of the Church (St Matthew 18:17). The Church has been given the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven so that whatever it looses or forgives on earth is forgiven in heaven and whatever sins are retained or not absolved by the Church on earth are retained, not forgiven, in heaven, as the Holy Scriptures teach (St. Matthew 18:18).

### **Salient Features of the Christian Faith**

There are certain salient features or characteristics of the Christian Faith as given in Holy Scripture and revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Church from the time of the apostles to the present that help us judge ourselves as to whether we are on the path to salvation or on the path to perdition. By these same judgments, the Church knows and identifies both her children and those who are alien to her.

- 1) The Christian Faith is a known and unchangeable body of Truth and Life manifested in the Body of Christ, i.e., the Church. The Christian Faith is always personal but never privatized. There is no Churchless Christianity because the Church is the Body of Christ by which we are joined to the Head, Christ the Saviour. The Church is not something we can start or create, and Christ is not a personal trinket we can

carry in our pocket at our own pleasure and will. To be a Christian is first and foremost to unite oneself to the Faith and Life of Christ as revealed through and offered in His Body, the Church, subject to His Headship. The Church is also the Bride of Christ and as the Bride of Christ she becomes our Mother. To be a Christian is to be embraced by the Church as our Mother who gives us the new birth in the womb of Holy Baptism, teaches us to discern between truth and error, trains us in godliness and virtues, feeds us with the Body and Blood of Christ and guides us to heaven. To reject the Church that Christ called His Bride and that St. Paul called the pillar and ground of truth is to reject Christ Himself (St. Matthew 18:17, I Timothy 3:15). The Christian Faith cannot be fashioned to our own beliefs and likes. There is one God, one Faith, one Church, one Baptism and one Lord Jesus Christ, once and for all delivered to the saints, as St. Paul taught (Ephesians 4:5, Jude 3). To be a Christian is to love and unite oneself to this Truth. **Those who do not love and seek to abide in the Truth of the Church cannot be reckoned to be her children.**

- 2) Perfection is not a requirement to be united to Christ's Church but repentance is. There is a world of difference between someone who falls, comes to himself, repents, and turns away from the fall versus someone who lives a fallen lifestyle, flaunts it, glorifies it and opposes those who stand for or promote Christian values, as does most of Hollywood. There is no Christian life without repentance. Repentance means to be grieved by our sins, to turn from them and to cast ourselves continually on the Mercy of God under the guidance of those whom God has placed in the Church to shepherd us.

- 3) Such repentance is prevented by pride but achieved through humility. Humility is not arrogant, self-conceited, puffed up, aggressive, flamboyant and demanding. It doesn't strut upon the stage of life but humbly confesses and forsakes its sins and seeks union with God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ.
- 4) To be a Christian in the Church of Christ is to strive against the passions of the flesh that oppose Christ while seeking to acquire the virtues of the Holy Spirit that unite us to Christ. The passions that oppose our union with Christ include the sins of our spirit such as pride, self-will, self-righteousness, greed, self-indulgence, intemperance, sloth, lying, deceit, guile, hatred, jealousy, gossip, unclean thoughts and desires, etc. The passions also include the sins of the flesh such as fornication, adultery, homosexuality, idolatry, witchcraft, murder/abortion, pornography, divorce, drunkenness/drugs, stealing, etc. The Bible tells us that those who live in unrepentant sin as a lifestyle cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. (I John 2:4 & 15-17; 3:3 & 10; Galatians 5:19-23; I Corinthians 6:9-10). St. John summarized it all in these words: *If we say that we have fellowship with him [Christ], and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth* (I John 1:6). Christ the Saviour teaches us in the Holy Gospels that to follow Him we have to deny ourselves and take up the cross (St. Matthew 16:24). He also tells us that anyone who rejects the teachings of His apostles rejects Him (Luke 10:16). Those who are in Christ are striving to overcome the passions and acquire the virtues of kindness, gentleness, meekness, temperance, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, etc.
- 5) Modesty and chastity in dress, appearance and conduct are also characteristics of Christians. A Christian doesn't dress to be sexy, display vanity and call attention to oneself. St.

Paul admonished women to strive for a spirit of meekness, sobriety and godliness instead of a worldly and vain outward adornment (I Timothy 2:9-10) – all the very opposite of Hollywood and the entertainment industry.

In all of these ways we are able to see that there is a clear demarcation between the Church and the world and that no one can serve two masters. He will either love the one and hate the other or hate the one and love the other. We cannot serve God and the world at the same time. The spirit of this world is opposed to the Spirit of God and those who would follow God will reject the spirit of the world as alien to the Kingdom of God. The Christian lives as an alien of this world (not as a celebrity of the world) in the awareness that this world is not home, but we look for a city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10). There are not different standards for different people in different professions. The requirements are the same for all who desire to follow Christ the Saviour.

There is a false notion in contemporary Christianity that anyone who says he believes in Christ, or who calls himself a Christian or just mentions the name of God or who prays or talks about faith is a Christian. But such notions contradict the teachings of the Bible and the Church. The Saviour taught: *Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father which is in heaven* (St. Matthew 7:21). Then in the following verses He said, *Many will say to me in that day [day of judgment], Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity* (St. Matthew 7:22-23). These words of the Saviour Himself clearly reveal the deceitful

understanding that prevails in contemporary Christianity that makes everyone a Christian who says they believe in God or Christ. As St. James said, *Thou believest that there is one God: thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble* (James 2:19). We are admonished to *strive to enter in at the straight gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leads unto life and few there be that find it* (St. Matthew 7:14-15).

St. Paul said that in the last days a spirit of blindness and deception will prevail, which is the spirit of anti-Christ. This spirit will overtake and deceive those who do not love the truth: *...because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness* (I Thessalonians 2:8-12).

In view of all of this we can begin to see how the beliefs and lifestyles of most celebrities are a contradiction to the Christian Faith. In general they hold a Churchless, self-made religion characterized by an indulgence of the passions, immoral lifestyles, glorification of immodesty and vanity and promotion of the spirit of this age. Once again, St. Paul said, those who do these things shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

Someone will surely say, "But what you are saying is hard, harsh, strict and unrealistic. We can't think or live like that in our times!" But the scripture verses quoted are not my words but the words of the Saviour and His apostles and they said it would not be easy, and it is narrow, and it does require sacrifice, self-denial and crucifixion of the passions, and many are called but few will be chosen. In the final analysis we are



faced with the question, do we believe the words of Holy Scripture or not? Do we want to be saved or not? And will we hold to the Faith of Christ and His apostles as held in the Church from the beginning or change it to suit our times and ourselves? If we can do that, then we have no faith and we have no hope.

